

# Press Releases: Venezuela: Maduro Government Must Stop Silencing Opposition Voices

Press Statement  
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The United States views with grave concern the Venezuelan government's actions to bar Miranda State Governor Henrique Capriles—a prominent, democratically-elected member of Venezuela's political opposition and former presidential candidate—from participating in the country's public life for 15 years.

We note the largest public demonstration of the year on Saturday, as well as protests today, and echo the Venezuelan people's calls for prompt elections, respect for the constitution and the National Assembly, and freedom for political prisoners. We urge demonstrators to express themselves non-violently and call on government security forces to protect peaceful protest, not prevent it. The freedom of assembly is a universal human right which the Venezuelan authorities must respect.

We firmly support the consensus of the Organization of American States Permanent Council, which affirms it is essential that the Government of Venezuela ensure the full restoration of democratic order. We urge President Maduro to reconsider the decision to bar Capriles and ensure Venezuelans can exercise their right to elect their representatives in free and fair elections in accordance with the Venezuelan constitution and consistent with international instruments, including the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

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